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Testimony of Animal Law Section  
CT Bar Association

IN SUPPORT OF

HB5344

An Act Concerning Support for Animals that are Neglected or Treated Cruelly

Judiciary Committee

Co-Chair Coleman, Co-Chair Tong and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Animal Law Section of the Connecticut Bar Association supports HB5344, An Act Concerning Support for Animals that are Neglected or Treated Cruelly. Implementing HB5344 will positively impact the effect of Connecticut's justice system.

House Bill 5344 will facilitate meaningful outcomes in animal abuse cases. This is critical in face of the significant and indisputable evidence linking animal abuse to domestic and other violence. The gravity of this reality is illustrated in the FBI's recent decision to collect statistics on animal abuse the way it does for other serious crimes.

Courts are in a unique position to ferret out those defendants more likely to pose a current or future threat to society and to mete out appropriate penalties, while taking appropriate action in crimes against sentient creatures. By appointing an advocate at the initiative of the court or, in the court's discretion, at the request of a party or counsel for a party, the court has the means to avail itself of more in-depth information related to a serious offense. Court advocates -- qualified pro-bono lawyers and volunteer law students -- will provide investigative information and insight not readily available to the court, thereby facilitating a more just treatment of *all* parties.

The Animal Law Section of the Connecticut Bar Association urges the passage of HB5344 into law this session.